

Thompson, one of the three heads of Government invited to make an opening statement before the function got down to "brass tacks", an exchange of views between the leaders and the West Indians who now call New York home-away-home, seemingly felt compelled to remark on the essential qualities that separate Jamaicans, Guyanese, Trinidadians, Antiguans, Vincentians, Grenadians and the rest of the Diaspora from other immigrants in North America, Europe and elsewhere. The dividing line is the desire to return to the land of their birth and live in comfort.

Admittedly, only a fraction of the millions of West Indians now living and working abroad ever return home and those who do usually keep one foot firmly planted in the U.S. be it New York, Boston, Miami, Hartford or Los Angeles and the other in their country of birth.

"If you are living in Ireland and meet somebody from Australia or the Ukraine, very seldom do they tell you that they are returning to those places. But most of the people you meet from the Caribbean they want to return home, said the Barbados leader.

That was why, he, added, West Indians living abroad should continue to find ways to be involved in what their countries are doing.

As Thompson saw it, the immigrants should have another item on their list of priorities: using their presence abroad to help the Caribbean region achieve its social and economic development goals.

"I don't think in your daily rounds and wherever you hold positions of influence, authority or where you can use your diplomacy and other skills you should forget to put the Caribbean's case forward and advance the interest of the Caribbean region," he said.

President Jagdeo added another dimension to the task: the election of officials to federal, state and local legislative bodies.

"While Barbados is important and Guyana and Jamaica are important we are Caribbean people," he told the gathering. "We have to work together as Caribbean people and (when we do) it significantly magnifies the power that people have within this society."

One way of flexing that muscle while at the same time pushing their own and the Caribbean's agenda was to help get people "who look like us and who share our views elected to offices at the local level, the state level and hopefully at the national level so that they can be sympathetic to the cause of the Caribbean and to make a better life and space for the Caribbean people who live here in the United States of America," Jagdeo argued.

But he didn't stop there.

"We hope that in November you all turn out and elect the person who we feel would be sensitive to our interest," he said. "This is a person I have seen in an image squatting outside of a small hut in Kenya."

"This of a person who although he is a Christian, he is very proud of that, grew up with an understanding of the Muslim faith," the president added. "Anyone who shares these experiences will understand us better, and will understand our challenges. We need that kind of person to lead the United States."

Although President Jagdeo was careful not to call a name and didn't pinpoint the elected position he had in mind, few persons, if any at all, had failed to identify U.S. Senator Barack whose quest for the White House in Washington has captivated Americans and has warmed the hearts of people around the world.

In his statement, PM King, who narrowly survived a recent political attempt and power struggle by leading members of his own ruling United Workers Party in St. Lucia to remove him from office, said that "it was important, vital was a better way of putting it, for Caribbean nations to dip into the vast human reservoir of talented human resources from the Caribbean that can be found in the United States". "We Caribbean leaders have recognized that the time has come for us to tap the resources available to us from the Diaspora," he said.

What a pity then that such an atmosphere of cordiality and interest wasn't reciprocated by a handful of immigrants, no more than five or six, mainly Guyanese, who turned up at the function to harass and condemn Dr. Jagdeo, and to do it in a disrespectful and shameless manner by shouting at him from their seats and before the microphones in an attempt to disrupt his presentation. Fortunately, the President was able to give even better than he got, responding to them in a clear and unemotional tone. But perhaps the most rousing welcome was reserved for the Belizean Prime Minister, the first person of truly African-heritage to lead CARICOM's lone country in Central America. Some of his enthusiastic political supporters who were seeing him for the first time since his election victory jumped for joy and waved their arms in delight and in turn were warmly acknowledged by a Prime Minister who seemingly enjoyed every second of the acclaim. PM Spencer, the Antiguan head of government, was upbeat as he soaked in the cheerful response from Antiguans in the audience and regularly took the opportunity to explain his government's and CARICOM's stance on domestic and regional issues.

The opportunity for an exchange of ideas wasn't lost on two members of Congress, Yvette Clarke of Brooklyn and Gregory Meeks of Queens, two lawmakers with large Caribbean constituents. When the time came for them to speak, they grasped the chance with both hands and used it to pledge continuing support for the region.

Interestingly, a public figure who wasn't there but was on most people's minds was U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel, Chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

It was Rangel who engineered the conference and opened the doors of Wall Street to the Prime Ministers and President Jagdeo. It was people's way of saying thanks to him. Of the leaders who came to New York, Jagdeo was the only one who had to face a few placard carrying hostile demonstrators. From all indications, he handled himself with aplomb, even breaking away from the protective shield of the Secret Service to have an exchange with some of his critics. "I was not afraid to talk to them," he said afterwards. In the event though, as William Shakespeare's immortal line reminds us "All's well that Ends Well."

And the conference certainly ended on a high note when some of the leaders joined U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel, Chairman of the influential Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, for breakfast at Sylvia's, a New York City landmark in Harlem.

The event at York College was chaired by Dr. Ivelaw Griffith, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. He's an expert on Caribbean security and has written several books and scholarly papers on the subject. The College's President Dr. Marcia Keizs, a Jamaican, set the tone with a welcome that reminded many in the theater-

style auditorium of their own experiences as immigrants: leaving home to go to better education abroad but with plans to return to the birthplace. Instead, they decide to stay on and in the process rise to the pinnacle of academic or professional success, or both.

Helen Marshall, the first Black person elected to serve as Borough President of Queens, also spoke and emphasized the value of maintaining links between the U.S. and the Caribbean. In her own Guyana, the homeland of her parents, it is a good example of bridging the geographic divide.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on July 14, 2008, due to a delayed flight, I was unable to cast one recorded vote on Roll-call vote 486, concerning H. Res. 1067, recognizing the 50th anniversary of the crossing of the North Pole by the U.S.S. *Nautilus*. Had I cast my vote, I would have voted "aye". I was present and able to vote on the next two measures.

ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE  
"UNITED STATES PAROLE COM-  
MISSION EXTENSION ACT OF  
2008"

### HON. JOHN CONYERS JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2008

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the "United States Parole Commission Extension Act of 2008" with Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH and Representatives BOBBY SCOTT, LOUIE GOHMERT and ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON. This legislation will extend the Parole Commissions' authority for another three years. This will be the fifth time since the elimination of Federal parole in 1987 that the Parole Commission has been reauthorized.

In the more than 20 years since the elimination of Federal parole, Congress has debated whether or not to phase-out the Parole Commission. Currently, the Commission has jurisdiction over all decisions regarding parole release for D.C. prisoners and decisions on mandatory release supervision and revocation for all persons serving D.C. felony sentences. The Commission also has jurisdiction over Federal and foreign transfer treaty offenders convicted before November 1987, some military code offenders and state defendants in the U.S. Marshals Service Witness Protection Program. According to the Parole Commission, at least 7500 people will fall into one of these categories by 2010. This is why in the 1996 extension of the Parole Commission, Congress finally recognized that there would be a need for the Commission through 2002 and beyond.

It is for these reasons that I am introducing this important legislation with my fellow Judiciary Committee Members and Representative HOLMES NORTON.